



LUNDY MARINE CONSULTATION GROUP

c/o The Honorary Secretary

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Notes of the 18th Meeting of the Consultation Group

held on Thursday, 24th March 1994 in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Bridge Street, Bideford at 7.00 pm.

Present:

Ian Knight	(IK)	Torrige District Council	[Chair]
Keith Bower	(KB)	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee	
Len Hawke	(LH)	M.A.F.F.	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	B.S.-A.C. & N. Devon & Ilfracombe Diving Club	
John Baker	(JB)	Royal Yachting Association	
Steve Mulberry	(SM)	National Trust	
Roger Hoad	(RH)	The Lundy Company	
Sián Pullen	(SP)	WWK UK	
David Townshend	(DT)	English Nature (Okehampton)	
Paul Gilliland	(PG)	English Nature (Peterborough)	
Jeremy Bates	(JB)	Observer	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society	[Secretary]

Welcome to new representatives: Paul Gilliland and Jeremy Bates were welcomed to the meeting. It had been hoped that a short piece of under water video footage, filmed by Jeremy Bates, was to have been shown at the meeting, but unfortunately the appropriate equipment was not available. It was hoped this might now happen at the next meeting of the Group.

1. Apologies for absence: Apologies had been received from Andrew Gibson (Lundy Warden) (AG); and Joan Edwards (Devon Wildlife Trust).

2. Notes on the last meeting, held on 30th September 1994: These were accepted as being an accurate account of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising: SM brought the Group up to date about the newly created voluntary Marine Conservation Area between Ilfracombe and Combe Martin (as mentioned during the last meeting under item 9). Three public meetings had been held, though apparently it was only the last that had been attended by more than a handful of people. However, progress was going well: an advisory committee had been set up and the Area was to be formally launched on 18th May 1994.

English Nature has part-funded an interpretation project officer post for two years. The Group wishes the new MCA well.

DT informed the Group of forthcoming administration changes within English Nature, due to come into force at the beginning of April. Lundy would now fall within the remit of the Devon & Cornwall "team", with staff based at EN's Okehampton office. Russell Gomm, who as NCC's deputy regional manager for the south-west had been instrumental in establishing the statutory MNR at Lundy and for bringing this Consultation Group into being, is taking early retirement from EN's Taunton office. Responsibility for Lundy's MNR and SSSI now lies with David Townshend. For marine matters, EN have a specialist support team based in Peterborough, whose staff includes Dr Dan Laffoley and Dr Paul Gilliland, both of whom have attended Group meetings. DT also mentioned the possibility that EN may be merging with the Countryside Commission - a feasibility study on this is due to report at the end of July.

4. Report from the Reserve: In Andrew Gibson's absence, his written report was read out by Roger Hoad and is attached at the end of these notes. The following discussion points were raised:-

i) KB pointed out that drift timber had also been found floating off S. Devon. Oiled guillemots too had been found off S. Devon, amounting to about 12 birds per week. Most were still alive and were dealt with by the RSPCA. The oil appeared to be heavy fuel or crude, but its source was not known. SP suggested it may be from tank washings, an illegal activity which unfortunately still goes on. LH said that although it was good to hear quantities of water-borne litter had decreased on the island, fishermen were still reporting large amounts of plastic and sewage-related debris being caught in trawl nets. This would surely be detrimental to the tourist industry.

ii) CM informed the Group that the BS-AC had offered to donate an O₂ administration kit to the island for use by divers (valued at about £350); and had offered to give AG & two others on the island a free day's course in its use.

iii) RH informed the Group of the hazards of old chains etc. being caught by the Oldenberg's anchor in the Landing Bay. The ship has had to jettison its anchor on three occasions now, and even had to have several links of the chain cut. The Lundy Company were seeking the services of a professional diving team to clear the seabed of this debris. CM offered the help of local divers to survey the Landing Bay and locate any such items. The Ilfracombe Club were planning a week-long visit to the island this summer and would be able to incorporate such a project into their planned activities.

iv) *Interpretation:* DT informed the Group of the Study that was undertaken last summer by a consultant regarding interpretive facilities on and off the island. The report which was produced listed 20 recommendations, some of which are being put into effect straight away. New signs for the MNR are now up on the quayside at Ilfracombe and Bideford. Five new "cheap & cheerful" leaflets will be ready for this summer's visitors. These are: a general leaflet (listing the others available) which will be available to all; shore walk; "marine" walk; seals; & sea birds (these last 4 being sold @ 20p each). Other additional leaflets are planned. There was also to be a waterproof sheet to help with identifying common species on the snorkel trail. A moveable, weatherproof information display was proposed for AG to use, encouraging visitors to go to other places on the island other than the Tavern! A promotional video for the MNR was also proposed and may be ready sometime this summer. SP pointed out that WWF UK had helped with funding for the Snorkel Trail.

v) *Marine archaeological interests:* PG explained that he & AG had met with a small number of people interested in Lundy's shipwrecks. From these discussions it was agreed that more information should be available about the two protected wrecks within the MNR; that AG may be involved with the issuing of licences for those wishing to dive on the protected wreck sites; that Lundy was a suitable venue for Nautical Archaeological Society training courses; and that the inventory of Lundy's wrecks could be improved (AG's son Chris has already made a start on this).

5. *The new Lundy MNR & SSSI Management Plan:* DT informed the Group that the new Management Plan was ready to be printed, once the directors of the four "governing bodies" (National Trust; Landmark Trust; Devon Sea Fisheries Committee; English Nature) has signed the frontispiece. Copies would be sent out to all Consultation Group members in April.

A number of points had been made on the draft version, and the majority of these had been incorporated into the final version. For one thing, there was now a better balance between the information covering the SSSI and the MNR. The main objective for the MNR has been altered, indicating that fishing within the MNR is acceptable as long as it is sustainable and does not damage the nature conservation interest of the area. There are 11 accompanying objectives.

A number of points were then discussed:-

i) *Employment of the Warden.* DT explained that the Warden (AG) was funded by EN through the Landmark Trust. This had led to some questions being raised as to whether AG was spending sufficient time on MNR matters as opposed to island duties. EN & LT were trying to clarify this situation. EN would like AG to spend more time with divers. The list of tasks for the Warden, as set out in the Management Plan, was very long and would be impossible for one man to complete, so they would be prioritised. CM pointed out that if AG was to be skippering the island's boat (Islander) for the use of divers, he would have little time to do other tasks. CM also mentioned that the BS-AC ran courses specifically for dive charter boat skippers, and recommended that AG applied to go on one. These included training in O₂ administration; first aid; dive marshalling etc.

ii) *Administration of the MNR:* It was proposed in the Management Plan that there should be two bodies involved with the management of the Reserve. There would be a **Management Committee** consisting of EN, DSFC, LT, & NT representatives, which would decide on management tasks, possible new byelaws and/or changes to the Code of Conduct, and implementation of these; and an **Advisory Group**, consisting of the same organisations as represented on the Consultation Group, which would help to advise the Management Committee. It was suggested that the Management Committee meetings would happen just *after* the Advisory Group meetings, i.e. in April and October each year, and that the minutes of the Management Committee meetings would be circulated to all members of the Advisory Group. The Warden would be invited to attend meetings of both groups. Matters arising from the Management Committee meetings would become a permanent agenda item for the following Advisory Group meetings, as was the Warden's report. It was agreed that the Advisory Group should just concern itself with matters to do with the MNR and not the SSSI as well.

iii) *The Lundy Marine Consultation Group:* As a result of the above, it was agreed that the Consultation Group should change its title. RI felt it important that the word "Advisory" be included as this indicated the link with the Management Committee. The *Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group* could well be the most suitable (albeit a little long winded!). Please let the Secretary know if you have any better suggestions soon before he changes the letterheads! It

was suggested that certain other reps. be invited to attend future meetings of the Advisory Group, notably marine archaeologists and an officer from the Hartland Heritage Coast, of which Lundy was a part. RI would re-jig the bottom of the Group's letterhead to incorporate any new representative bodies. Apologies were passed on to Torrridge District Council for excluding their name from the existing letterhead. SP requested that an opportunity was allowed for in future agendas of the Group for discussion of marine matters outwith the immediate vicinity of Lundy, e.g. oil exploration licences and dredging licences in the Bristol Channel. On this theme, LH reported that ARC Marine are extracting 500 tonnes of material from off Baggy Pt., Bideford Bay, as a feasibility study for a possible further 5-year extraction proposal. He agreed to ensure the Advisory Group were officially included in future licence consultation rounds.

6. Any other business: KB pointed out that the Dept. of Transport were about to introduce new requirements for skippers of charter vessels (including dive boats). This would affect the users of the island's own boat. CM informed the Group of a new wreck which had been found off the S. end of the island at the end of last year at 42 m depth, likely to be that of an old steamship.

7. Date of the next meeting: Thursday, 29th September 1994 @ 7.00 pm.

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REPORT FROM THE RESERVE

Weather The weather has been very wet with frequent periods of high winds. Several Oldenburg sailing's were cancelled because of the winds and two Jennys Cove landings were made during September. Visitors were not able to get on for Christmas, but New Year was possible. A single snow shower occurred in February, with about one inch of snow lying for about 6 hours. A number of ships have sheltered off the island in bad weather and this has included several Belgium trawlers - we have not experienced washed up net twine after the trawlers have left for some time. Following one strong wind there was a great deal of timber floating around the island, but the wind changed to South West before more than a token amount could be collected.

Landing Bay The winds caused several movements of shingle from the beach, but at the present time most areas have returned to similar conditions to last summer. In the bay chains and other debris seem to have moved and the Oldenburg has snagged its anchor on a number of objects. Divers have attempted to recover one chain, but it is now causing considerable problems in the main mooring area. We need to seek the help of local divers to map out the bay and move any obstacles from the central area. There has been very little plastic rubbish washed up, but in the last two months there have been eight oiled or injured Guillemots found in the Landing Bay.

Diving No diving has taken place during the period. Bookings for this year are similar to last year with July being the most popular month. Advertising for the island was placed in the Diver and Scuba World - Some charter boats do not cater for divers very sympathetically and we felt that some of the criticisms levelled against these operators is bad for the reserve. In order to redress the situation, we wanted to advertise the fact, that resident divers normally have a greater chance of making the most of diving Lundy.

Snorkelling Apart from one hardy group in November there has not been any snorkelling. The total number of people using the equipment last year was 245. This spring, we will be converting the present compressor room into a snorkellers changing room and making the outside area into a drying room. BELL throwing lines are being sited on the beach to improve safety. I have completed all the indoor work associated with the BSAC Snorkel Instructors qualification and will be finishing off the open water part in early June. This training is needed for working with youth groups and schools. It has been arranged by BSAC and will also include the diver coxswain endorsement. The underwater nature trail will be reinstalled at the end of April.

Interpretation The new MNR information board has been fixed to the Bideford shore office and has already attracted attention. An information display for the Landing Beach is being produced and will be on the island by Whitsun. This board will provide a focal point for both day visitors and stayers and will contain a new range of leaflets designed to help the day

visitors particularly, get the most out of their visit. The leaflet titles include - A shore walk, A marine walk, Seals, Breeding seabirds and a terrestrial walk. To advertise the walks, a leaflet of general information will be given to everyone who purchases a ticket for the Oldenburg.

Archaeology English Nature have recently held a meeting with marine archaeological authorities and as a result of this meeting, it is hoped that the Lundy protected wrecks will be easier to police, but at the same time available for a greater level of viewing. We have also been promised interpretation material for the two listed wrecks.

A count of seal pups was attempted in September, but weather conditions forced it to be stopped after completing the east side. The information collected, together with recording from the shore, indicate that numbers are almost static with about 80 adults throughout the year, rising to approximately 130 during the summer.

The warden attended a Marine Conservation Forum in London in February. The forum was well supported and demonstrates the growing awareness of marine conservation. When published, the papers presented at the forum will be available on the island.

Andrew Gibson
March 1994